# Celebrating Valentine's Day



Muhammad Salih Al-Munajjid

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Praise be to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds, and blessings and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon all his family and companions.

Allaah has chosen for us Islam as our religion and He will not accept any other religion from anyone, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

*"And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers [Aal 'Imraan 3:85]*

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told us that groups of his ummah would follow the enemies of Allaah in some of their rituals and customs, as it says in the hadeeth of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (may Allaah be pleased with him), who narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "You will certainly follow the ways of those who came before you, span by span, cubit by cubit, until even if they were to enter a lizard's hole, you would follow them." We said, "O Messenger of Allaah, (do you mean) the Jews and Christians?" He said, "Who else?!"

(Narrated by al-Bukhaari in *al-I'tisaam bi'l-Kitaab wa'l-Sunnah, Baab Qawl al-Nabi (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) La tattabi'unna Sanan man kaana qablakum,* 8/151; and by Muslim in *Kitaab al-'Ilm, Baab Ittibaa' Sanan al-Yahood wa'l-Nasaara*, 4/2054)

What the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) spoke of has indeed come to pass and has become widespread in recent times, in many of the Muslim countries. Many of the Muslims follow the enemies of Allaah in many of their customs and ways of behaving, and imitate them in some of their rituals and in celebrating their holidays.

The matter has been made even worse by the opening up of mass communications between peoples, whereby the rituals and customs of the kuffaar are now transmitted with the glamorous adornment of sound and image from their countries into the Muslim countries, via satellite TV and the World Wide Web (Internet). Many Muslims have been deceived by their glamour.

In recent years, a new phenomenon has spread among the Muslim youth – males and females alike – which does not bode well. This is manifested in their imitation of the Christians in their celebration of the Valentine's Day, which has led the scholars and daa'iyahs to explain the rulings of sharee'ah concerning that, out of sincerity towards Allaah, His Messenger, the leaders of the Muslims and their common folk, so that Muslims may have a clear understanding of this issue and so that they will not fall into that which will undermine the belief (*'aqeedah*) with which Allaah has blessed them.

This is a brief discussion of the origins, development and purpose of this holiday, and what

the Muslim should do with regard to it.

The story of the Festival of Love (Valentine's Day)

The Festival of Love was one of the festivals of the pagan Romans, when paganism was the prevalent religion of the Romans more than seventeen centuries ago. In the pagan Roman concept, it was an expression of "spiritual love".

There were myths associated with this pagan festival of the Romans, which persisted with their Christian heirs. Among the most famous of these myths was the Roman belief that Romulus, the founder of Rome, was suckled one day by a she-wolf, which gave him strength and wisdom.

The Romans used to celebrate this event in mid-February each year with a big festival. One of the rituals of this festival was the sacrifice of a dog and a goat. Two strong and muscular youths would daub the blood of the dog and goat onto their bodies, then they would wash the blood away with milk. After that there would be a great parade, with these two youths at its head, which would go about the streets. The two youths would have pieces of leather with which they would hit everyone who crossed their path. The Roman women would welcome these blows, because they believed that they could prevent or cure infertility.

The connection between Saint Valentine and this festival

Saint Valentine is a name which is given to two of the ancient "martyrs" of the Christian Church. It was said that there were two of them, or that there was only one, who died in Rome as the result of the persecution of the Gothic leader Claudius, c. 296 CE. In 350 CE, a church was built in Rome on the site of the place where he died, to perpetuate his memory.

When the Romans embraced Christianity, they continued to celebrate the Feast of Love mentioned above, but they changed it from the pagan concept of "spiritual love" to another concept known as the "martyrs of love", represented by Saint Valentine who had advocated love and peace, for which cause he was martyred, according to their claims. It was also called the Feast of Lovers, and Saint Valentine was considered to be the patron saint of lovers.

One of their false beliefs connected with this festival was that the names of girls who had reached marriageable age would be written on small rolls of paper and placed in a dish on a table. Then the young men who wanted to get married would be called, and each of them would pick a piece of paper. He would put himself at the service of the girl whose name he had drawn for one year, so that they could find out about one another. Then they would get married, or they would repeat the same process again on the day of the festival in the following year.

The Christian clergy reacted against this tradition, which they considered to have a corrupting influence on the morals of young men and women. It was abolished in Italy, where it had been well-known, then it was revived in the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries, when in some western countries there appeared shops which sold small books called “Valentine’s books”, which contained love poems, from which the one who wanted to send a greeting to his sweetheart could choose. They also contained suggestions for writing love letters.

It was also said concerning the origins of this holiday that when the Romans became Christian, after Christianity had become widespread, the Roman emperor Claudius II decreed in the third century CE that soldiers should not get married, because marriage would distract them from the wars they used to fight. This decree was opposed by Saint Valentine, who started to perform marriages for the soldiers in secret. When the emperor found out about that, he threw him in jail and sentenced him to execution. In prison, he (Saint Valentine) fell in love with the jailer’s daughter, but this was a secret because according to Christian laws, priests and monks were forbidden to marry or fall in love. But he is still regarded highly by the Christians because of his steadfastness in adhering to Christianity when the emperor offered to pardon him if he forsook Christianity and worshipped the Roman gods; then he would be one of his closest confidantes and he would make him his son-in-law. But Valentine refused this offer and preferred Christianity, so he was executed on 14 February 270 CE, on the eve of February 15, the festival of Lupercalis. So this day was named for this saint.

In *The Story of Civilization*, it says that the Church devised a calendar in which every day was designated as the feast day of one of the saints. In England, Saint Valentine’s Day was to come at the end of winter. When that day came, according to them, the birds mated enthusiastically in the forests, and the young men would put flowers on the windowsills of the homes of the girls whom they loved. (*The Story of Civilization* by Will Durant, 15/23)

The Pope designated the day of the death of Saint Valentine, February 14, 270 CE, as a festival of love. Who is the Pope? He is the “the archbishop, the supreme pontiff of the universal church, the successor of Saint Peter.” Look at this “archbishop” and how he prescribed for them the observance of this festival which was an innovation in their religion. This reminds us of what Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“They (Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allaah (by obeying them in things which they made lawful or unlawful according to their own desires without being ordered by Allaah)…”*[al-Tawbah 9:31]*

It was narrated that ‘Adiy ibn Haatim said: “I came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) wearing a gold cross around my neck. He said, ‘O ‘Adiy, cast aside this idol.’ And I heard him reciting from *Soorat Baraa’ah* [*al-Tawbah*] (interpretation of the meaning): ‘*They (Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allaah.’* He said: ‘They do not worship them, but when they permit them something they accept it as permitted, and when they forbid them something they accept it as forbidden.’” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi and it is a hasan hadeeth).

<u>Among the most important symbols of this holiday:</u>

1 – Expressing joy and happiness on this occasion, as on their other major festivals.

2 – Exchanging red roses, which are an expression of love, the “spiritual love” of the pagans or the “love” of the Christians. Hence it is known to them as the Feast of Lovers.

3 – The sending of greetings cards. On some of these cards are pictures of “Cupid”, who appears as a child with two wings, carrying a bow and arrows. This was the god of love of the pagan Romans – exalted be Allaah far above their fabrications and their association of others with Him.

4 – Exchange of words of love and desire in the greetings cards which they send to one another, in verse, prose and short phrases. Some of the cards contain comical pictures and funny words, and they often contain the phrase “be my Valentine”. This represents the Christian concept of this festival after it was taken from the pagan concept.

5 – In many western countries, parties are held during the day and in the evening, where there is mixing of men and women, and dancing. Many of them send gifts such as roses and boxes of chocolates to their wives, friends and those whom they love.

Anyone who looks at what is said above about the myths surrounding this pagan festival will clearly understand the following:

Firstly:

That its origins lie in the pagan beliefs of the Romans, where it was an expression of the spiritual love of the idols which they used to worship instead of Allaah. Whoever celebrates it is celebrating an occasion of *shirk* on which the idols are venerated. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

*“Verily, whosoever sets up partners (in worship) with Allaah, then Allaah has forbidden Paradise to him, and the Fire will be his abode. And for the Zaalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers) there are no helpers”[al-Maa’idah 5:72]*

Secondly:

That the development of this festival among the Romans was connected to myths and legends which no sound mind can accept, let alone the mind of the Muslim who believes in Allaah and His Messengers (peace be upon them). Can anyone of sound mind believe that a she-wolf suckled the founder of the city of Rome and gave him strength and wisdom. Moreover, these myths go against the belief (‘*aqeedah*) of the Muslim because the One Who bestows strength and wisdom is the Creator, may He be glorified and exalted, not the milk of a she-wolf! The same applies to the myth that their idols could protect them from evil or keep wolves away from their flocks.

Thirdly:

Among the ugly rituals of the Romans on this day was the sacrifice of a dog and a goat, the daubing of their blood onto two youths then washing the blood off with milk, etc… This is something that would cause revulsion in anyone of a sound nature, and it is unacceptable to the sound mind.

Fourthly:

The connection between Saint Valentine and this festival has been questioned by many sources, and it considered to be far from definite. It would have been better for the Christians to reject this pagan festival in which they imitated the pagans. So how about us Muslims, who are commanded to be different from the Christians and the pagans before them?

Fifthly: this festival was denounced by the Christian clergy in Italy, the bastion of Catholicism, because it was spreading bad attitudes and having an adverse effect on the minds of young men and women. So it is better for the Muslims to reject it, warn others against it and to fulfil their duty towards it of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil.

Someone may ask: why do we Muslims not celebrate this festival?

This question may be answered in several ways:

1. In Islam, the festivals are clearly defined and well established, and no additions or subtractions may be accepted. They are an essential part of our worship and there is no room for ijtihaad or personal opinion. They have been prescribed for us by Allaah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

   “Festivals are part of the laws, clear way and religious ceremonies of which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

   *‘To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way[al-Maa’idah 5:48]*

   *‘For every nation We have ordained religious ceremonies which they must follow’[al-Hajj 22:67]*

   like the qiblah (direction faced in prayer), prayer and fasting. So there is no difference between joining them in their festival and joining them in their other rituals. Agreeing with the whole festival is agreeing with *kufr*. Agreeing with some of their minor issues is the same as agreeing with them in some of the branches of *kufr*. Festivals are the most distinctive things by which religions are told apart, so whoever celebrates their festivals is agreeing with the most distinctive rituals of *kufr*. Undoubtedly going along with them in their festivals may in some cases lead to kufr. Dabbling in these things, at the very least, is a sin. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) referred to the fact that every nation has its own festivals when he said: ‘Every nation has its own Eid

and this is our Eid' (al-Bukhaari , 952, Muslim, 1892)." (*al-Iqtidaa'*, 1/471-472)

Because Valentine's Day goes back to Roman times, not Islamic times, this means that it is something which belongs exclusively to the Christians, not to Islam, and the Muslims have no share and no part in it. If every nation has its own festivals, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said – "Every nation has its Eid" (narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim) – then this means that every nation should be distinguished by its festivals. If the Christians have a festival and the Jews have a festival, which belongs exclusively to them, then no Muslim should join in with them, just as he does not share their religion or their direction of prayer.

2. Celebrating Valentine's Day means resembling or imitating the pagan Romans, then the Christian People of the Book in their imitation of the Romans in something that was not a part of their religion. If it is not allowed to imitate the Christians in things that really are part of their religion – but not part of our religion – then how about things which they have innovated in their religion in imitation of idol-worshippers?!

Imitating the kuffaar in general –whether they are idol-worshippers or People of the Book – is haraam, whether that imitation is of their worship – which is the most serious form – or of their customs and behaviour. This is indicated by the Qur'aan, Sunnah and *ijmaa'* (scholarly consensus):

(i) From the Qur'aan: Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

*"And be not as those who divided and differed among themselves after the clear proofs had come to them. It is they for whom there is an awful torment"[Aal 'Imraan 3:105]*

(ii) From the Sunnah: the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

"Whoever imitates a people is one of them." (narrated by Ahmad, 2/50; Abu Dawood, 4021)

Shaykh al-Islam (Ibn Taymiyah) said: "This hadeeth at the very least indicates that it is haraam to imitate them, although the apparent meaning implies that the one who imitates them is a kaafir, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): '*And if any amongst you takes them (as Awliyaa' [friends and helpers]), then surely, he is one of them' [al-Maa'idah 5:51]*." (*al-Iqtidaa'*, 2/722-725)

(iii) With regard to ijmaa', Ibn Taymiyan narrated that there was agreement that it is haraam to imitate the kuffaar in their festivals at the time of the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them), and Ibn al-Qayyim narrated that there was scholarly consensus on this point. (See *al-Iqtidaa'*, 1/454; Ahkaam Ahl al-Dhimmah, 2/722-725)

Allaah has forbidden imitation of the kuffaar; He has described it as hateful and has warned against the consequences of that, in many aayahs, on many occasions, and in various ways, especially imitation of the kuffaar. Sometimes He does that by forbidding following them or obeying them; sometimes by warning against them or being deceived by their plots, following their opinions, or being influenced by their actions, conduct or attitude. Sometimes He does that by mentioning some of their characteristics that will put the believers off from them and from imitating them. Most of the warnings in the Qur'aan refer to the Jews and hypocrites (munaafiqeen), then the People of the Book in general and the mushrikeen. Allaah tells us in the Qur'aan that imitating and obeying the kuffaar may constitute *riddah* (apostasy). Allaah also forbids following them, obeying them, or following their whims and desires and bad characteristics.

Prohibition of imitating the kuffaar is one of the basic principles of sharee'ah. Allaah sent His Messenger with guidance and the true religion so that it might prevail over all other religions, and Allaah has perfected His religion for mankind:

*"This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion"[al-Maa'idah 5:3 – interpretation of the meaning].*

Allaah has made Islam cover all (human) interests at all times and in all places and for all people. So there is no need to adopt the ways of the kuffaar or imitate them.

Imitation causes defects in the Muslim personality, such as feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, weakness and defeatism, then it leads to shunning and keeping away from the path and laws of Allaah. Experience has shown that admiration for the kuffaar and imitation of them causes people to love them, have complete faith in them and take them as friends and helpers, and to reject Islam and its people, its heroes, its legacy and values, and become ignorant of all of that.

3. The purpose of Valentine's Day in these times is to spread love between all people, believers and disbelievers alike. Undoubtedly it is haraam to love the kaafirs. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

   *"You (O Muhammad) will not find any people who believe in Allaah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allaah and His Messenger (Muhammad), even though they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred (people) …"[al-Mujaadilah 58:22]*

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "Allaah tells us that there is no believer who takes a kaafir as a close friend. Whoever takes a kaafir as a close friend is not a believer. Outward imitation may be taken as a sign of love, so it is haraam." (*al-Iqtidaa'*, 1/490).

4. The love referred to in this festival ever since the Christians revived it is romantic love outside the framework of marriage. The result of that is the spread of *zinaa* (fornication

and adultery) and immorality. Hence the Christian clergy opposed it at some stage and abolished it, then it came back again.

Most of the young people celebrate it because it lets them fulfil their desires, without thinking of the issues of imitation and resembling that are involved. Look at this tragedy, where they go so far as to commit major sins such as *zinaa* and the like, by imitating the Christians in something which is part of their worship and which may even be kufr.

Some people may wonder, and say, you mean to deprive us of love, but in this day and age we express our feelings and emotions – what is so wrong with that?

We say:

Firstly:

It is a mistake to confuse what they call the day with what the real intentions are behind it. The love referred to on this day is romantic love, taking mistresses and lovers, boyfriends and girlfriends. It is known to be a day of promiscuity and sex for them, with no restraints or restrictions… They are not talking of pure love between a man and his wife or a woman and her husband, or at least they do not distinguish between the legitimate love in the relationship between husband and wife, and the forbidden love of mistresses and lovers. This festival for them is a means for everyone to express love.

Secondly:

Expression of feelings and emotions is not a justification for the Muslim to allocate a day for celebration based on his own thoughts and ideas, and to call it a festival, or make it like a festival or Eid. So how about when it is one of the festivals of the *kuffaar*?

In Islam, a husband loves his wife throughout the year, and he expresses that love towards her with gifts, in verse and in prose, in letters and in other ways, throughout the years – not just on one day of the year.

Thirdly:

There is no religion which encourages its followers to love and care for one another more than Islam does. This applies at all times and in all circumstances, not just on one particular day. Indeed, Islam encourages us to express our emotions and love at all times, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "If a man loves his brother, let him tell him that he loves him." (narrated by Abu Dawood, 5124; al-Tirmidhi, 2329; it is *saheeh*).

And he said: "By the One in Whose hand is my soul, you will not enter Paradise until you truly believe, and you will not truly believe until you love one another. Shall I not tell you of something that, if you do it, you will love one another? Spread (the greeting of) *salaam* amongst yourselves." (Narrated by Muslim, 54)

Fourthly:

Love in Islam is more general and more comprehensive; it is not restricted only to one kind of love, that between a man and a woman. There are many more kinds of love. There is the love of Allaah, love of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and his companions (may Allaah be pleased with them), love for good and righteous people, love and support for the religion, love of martyrdom for the sake of Allaah. There are many kinds of love. It is a dangerous mistake to restrict this broad meaning to this one kind of love.

Fifthly:

What these people think, that love before marriage is a good thing, is wrong, as has been proven in studies and by real-life experience. In a study conducted by the University of Cairo, on what they called "love marriage" and "traditional marriage", the following was stated:

In marriages which came after a love story, 88% of cases ended in failure, i.e., the success rate was not more than 12%. But in cases of what the study calls traditional marriage, 70% were successful. In other words, the success rate in marriages described as traditional was six times more than those described as "love marriages". (*Risaalah ila Mu'minah,* p. 255).

Now let us look at the state of affairs in western societies where Valentine's Day is celebrated, and ask, what is the state of marriage relationships in those societies, and do these celebrations have any positive effect on interactions between husbands and wives?

Their own studies and statistics show the following:

1- In an American study done in 1407 AH/1987 CE, it states that 79% of men beat their womenfolk, especially if they are married…! (*al-Qabas* newspaper, 15/2/1988).

2- A study carried out by the National American Office for Mental Health states the following:

  - 17% of women who go to emergency rooms are victims of beatings by their husbands or boyfriends.

  - 83% of those who have previously been admitted to hospital at least once for treatment of injuries, were admitted as a result of beating.

  The study added that there are more women who do not go to hospital for treatment, but deal with their injuries at home.

3- In a report of the Central American Agency for Examination [FPT] it states that every 18 seconds there is a woman who is beaten by her husband somewhere in America.

4- American *Time* magazine stated that around 4,000 wives out of approximately 6

million who are beaten die as a result of that beating.

5- In a German study it said that no less that 100,000 women annually are exposed to acts of physical or psychological abuse on the part of their husbands or the men they live with. The real figure may exceed one million.

6- In France, approximately 2 million women face beatings.

7- In Britain, in an opinion poll in which 7,000 women took part, 28% of them said that they had been subjected to attacks by their husbands and boyfriends.

So how can we believe that Valentine's Day is of any benefit to married couples? The truth is that it is a call for more permissiveness and immorality, and the forming of forbidden relationships.

The husband who sincerely loves his wife does not need this holiday to remind him of his love. He expresses his love for his wife at all times and on all occasions.

The Muslim's attitude towards Valentine's Day

From the above discussion, the Muslim's attitude towards this holiday should be clear:

(1) He should not celebrate it, or join others in their celebrations of it, or attend their celebrations, because of the evidence quoted above which shows that it is forbidden to celebrate the festivals of the *kuffaar*.

Al-Haafiz al-Dhahabi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "If the Christians have a festival and the Jews have a festival, which belongs only to them, then the Muslim should not join them in that, just as he does not join them in their religion or their direction of prayer." (*Tashabbuh al-Khasees bi Ahl al-Khamees*, *al-Hikmah* magazine, 4/193).

Because one of the basic principles of the pious predecessors was *al-walaa' wa'l-baraa'* (loyalty and friendship vs. disavowal and enmity), it is obligatory for everyone who says *Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah Muhammad Rasool Allaah* to follow this principle. So he should love the believers and he should hate the disbelievers, oppose them, and be different from them. He should know that that will bring immeasurable benefits, just as imitating them causes far greater harm. In addition to that, when the Muslims imitate them it makes the kuffaar happy and fills their hearts with joy, and it leads the Muslims to love the kuffaar in their hearts. If any Muslim girl who celebrates this holiday because she sees Margaret or Hilary or whoever doing so, this undoubtedly reflects the fact that she is following them and approves of their behaviour. But Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as Awliyaa' (friends, protectors, helpers), they are but Awliyaa' of each other. And if any amongst you takes them (as Awliyaa'), then surely, he is one of them. Verily, Allaah guides not those people who are the Zaalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers and unjust)"*[al-Maa'idah 5:51]*

One of the bad effects of imitating them is that this makes it look as if there are more of them, as if they have more supporters and followers. How can it be appropriate for a Muslim who recites in every rak'ah, *"Guide us to the Straight Way, The way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger, nor of those who went astray" [al-Faatihah 1:6-7 – interpretation of the meaning]*, to ask Allaah for guidance to the Straight Path of the believers and to keep him away from the path of those who have earned His anger and of those who went astray, then go and follow their path by choice and willingly?

Statistics indicate that Valentine's Day is second only to Christmas in popularity. So it is clear that the Feast of Love is one of the festivals of the Christians and that it is second only to the festival of Christmas, the celebration of the birth of the Messiah. So it is not permissible for Muslims to join in the celebrations of this date, because we are commanded to differ from them in their religion, customs and other things that belong exclusively to them, as is stated in the Qur'aan and Sunnah and scholarly consensus.

(2) He should not help the kuffaar in their celebrations, because it is one of the rituals of kufr, so helping them and approving of what they do is helping them to manifest kufr and make it prevail, and approving of it. The Muslim's religion does not allow him to approve of kufr or help others to manifest it and make it prevail. Hence Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "It is not permissible for the Muslims to imitate them in anything that is specifically part of their festivals, whether it is food, clothing, bathing, lighting fires, or changing a custom of daily life or worship… To sum up, they should not do any of the specific rituals of their (the *kuffaar's*) festival on that day; rather the day of their festival should be just another ordinary day for the Muslim." (*Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 25/329)

(3) He should not help any Muslims who celebrate it. Rather it is obligatory to denounce them, because for the Muslims to celebrate the festivals of the kuffaar is an evil action which must be denounced. Shaykh al-Islam (Ibn Taymiyah) said: "Just as we should not imitate them in their festivals, so too we should not help a Muslim to do that; rather he should be told not to do that." (*al-Iqtidaa'*, 2/519-520)

Based on what Ibn Taymiyah said, it is not permissible for Muslim businessmen to deal in gifts for Valentine's Day, whether they are particular kinds of clothes, red roses, or whatever. Similarly, it is not permissible for the one who is given a gift on this occasion to accept it, because by accepting it, he is showing approval of this holiday.

One of the *daa'iyahs* said: we went to a flower shop in one of the Muslim countries and we were shocked to find it completely prepared for this occasion, with red carpets at the entrance, red placards and red decorations. We were met by one of the people who worked there, and we asked him why they had done so much to decorate the place for this occasion. He said that these preparations had begun early, and that there had been very many orders… Then he told us that he had been amazed by that, because he was a new Muslim who had left Christianity. He had known about that before he became Muslim, so how come his

customers were Muslims and not Christians?!

Other shops ran out of red roses, which were being sold at high prices. When one of the female daa'iyahs entered upon the female students who were gathered in the lecture hall, she was dismayed to find them all carrying something red. One had a red rose, another had a red scarf, or a red handkerchief, or a red bag, or red socks…

Alas for the Muslim girls!

Among the things that have been seen among the Muslims on this holiday:

1- All the female students agreeing with their friends to tie a red ribbon on the right wrist.

2- Wearing something red (a blouse, hair clip, shoes…). This reached such an extent last year that when we entered the classroom we found most of the students wearing it, as if it was a uniform.

3- Red balloons on which are written the words "I love you". They usually bring these out at the end of the school day, in an area far from where the teachers can see them.

4- Writing names and hearts on their hands, or just initials.

5- Red roses are widespread on this day.

Groups of girls entered their lecture rooms on February 14, each of them wearing something red, with red heart-shaped stickers on their faces, wearing red make-up. They started to exchange red-coloured gifts and kiss one another warmly. This happened in more than one university in the Muslim world, even in an Islamic university. In other words they were celebrating Saint Valentine's Day.

On that day, secondary schools (high schools) were astonished by the large numbers of female students who brought red roses of the finest quality, coloured their faces with red cosmetics, wore red earrings, and started to exchange gifts and warm greetings, in celebration of this day.

*Al-Mawsoo'ah al-'Arabiyyah* (the Arabic Encyclopaedia) says that there are special customs for Valentine's Day, such as printing love poems on cards to be given to relatives and those whom one loves. Some of them draw funny pictures on these cards, and the most common phrase written on them is "be my Valentine". Parties are often held during the day, where they dance in their fashion. The Europeans still celebrate this holiday. In Britain, sales of flowers reached 22 million pounds. More chocolate is consumed on this day, and companies offer free messages on their Web sites to advertise those sites.

Valentine's Day has come to a number of Arab and Muslim countries, and has even reached the heartland of Islam (the Arabian Peninsula). It has reached societies which we had thought far removed from this insanity. In Riyadh the price of roses has risen in a crazy

manner, so that a single rose costs 36 riyals (10 dollars), whereas before this day it cost 5 riyals. Gift shops and card shops compete in designing cards and gifts for this occasion, and some families hang up red roses in the windows of their homes on this day.

In some of the Gulf countries, shopping centres and hotels have organized special celebrations of Valentine's Day. Most of the stores and business places are covered with red. One of the finest Gulf hotels was full of balloons and dolls. Following the customs of the Feast of Love and the pagan myths, the restaurant put on a dramatic production with "Cupid", the idol of love in the Roman myths, nearly naked and carrying a bow and arrow. He and his cohorts were looking to select "Mr. & Mrs. Valentine" from among the people present.

Less expensive restaurants also celebrated this day in their own way. Some stores replaced their regular plates with heart-shaped plates, used red tablecloths and linens, and put a red rose on each table for the man to present to his beloved.

The latest Valentine's Day craze was started by the owner of a gift-shop in Kuwait. He imports (live) French rabbits which are small and have red eyes. He puts a necktie around the neck of each rabbit, and puts it in a small box to be given as a gift!

We must oppose these things by all possible means. The responsibility rests with us all.

(4) We should not accept congratulations on Valentine's Day, because it is not a holiday or an Eid for the Muslims. If the Muslim is congratulated on this occasion, he should not return the congratulations. Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "With regard to congratulating others with the congratulations used by the kuffaar on such occasions, it is haraam by scholarly consensus, such as congratulating them on the occasion of their festivals or fasts, wishing them a blessed festival, etc. Even if the one who says this is free of kufr, it is still haraam. It is like congratulating someone for prostrating to the cross. It is even worse with Allaah and more hated by Him than congratulating someone for drinking alcohol, or committing murder or adultery, etc. Many of those who have no respect for religion do that, and they do not realize the abhorrence of their actions. Whoever congratulates a person for sin, innovation (bid'ah) or kufr exposes himself to the hatred and wrath of Allaah." (*Ahkaam Ahl al-Dhimmah*, 1/441-442)

(5) We must explain the true nature of this holiday and other festivals of the kuffaar to those Muslims who have been deceived by them, and explain to them that it is essential for the Muslim to be distinguished by his religion and to protect his belief ('*aqeedah*) from anything that may damage it. This should be done out of sincerity towards the ummah and in fulfilment of the command to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil.

Fatwas of Muslim scholars concerning Valentine's Day

The Fatwa of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him)

Question:

In recent times the celebration of Valentine’s Day has become widespread, especially among female students. This is one of the Christian holidays. They wear all red clothes, including their shoes, and they exchange red flowers… We hope that you can tell us the ruling on celebrating such holidays. What do you advise the Muslims to do with regard to such things? May Allaah keep you and take care of you.

He replied:

Celebrating Valentine’s Day is not permitted for several reasons:

1 – It is an innovated celebration which has no basis in sharee’ah.

2 – It calls for people to keep their hearts and minds busy with these foolish things that go against the guidance of the pious predecessors (may Allaah be pleased with them), so it is not permitted on this day to do any of the customs associated with that holiday, whether that be connected to food, drink, clothing, exchanging gifts or anything else. The Muslim should be proud of his religion and not be so weak of character that he follows everyone who makes a noise. I ask Allaah to protect the Muslims from all temptations, visible and invisible, and to take care of us and give us strength. And Allaah knows best.

The Fatwa of Shaykh ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Jibreen concerning celebrating this day

He was asked: the celebration of the so-called Feast of Love (Valentine’s Day) has become widespread among our boys and girls. This (Valentine) is the name of a saint who is venerated by the Christians, and this day is celebrated every year on February 14. They exchange gifts and red roses, and they wear red clothes. What is the ruling on celebrating this day, or exchanging gifts on this day? May Allaah reward you with good.

He answered:

Firstly, it is not permissible to celebrate such innovated festivals, because this is a newly-invented innovation (bid’ah) which has no basis in sharee’ah. So it is included in the hadeeth of ‘Aa’ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her), who said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever innovates something in this matter of ours (i.e., Islam) which is not part of it, will have it rejected” – i.e., it will be thrown back upon the one who innovated it.

Secondly, this involves imitating and resembling the kuffaar in venerating that which they venerate and respecting their festivals and holidays, and imitating them in some of their religious practices. In the hadeeth it says, “Whoever imitates a people is one of them.”

Thirdly, the things that result from that, such as partying, idle play, singing, music, insolence, impertinence, unveiling, wanton display, mixing of men and women, and the appearance of women before non-mahrams, etc., are all things which are haraam, or are means which lead to immorality. So it should not be justified as an excuse for relaxation and entertainment, or claims that they will not overstep the mark, because that is not right. The one who cares about himself should keep away from sin and all that leads to it.

On this basis, it is not permissible to sell these gifts and roses, if one knows that the purchaser will celebrate these holidays, give them as gifts or otherwise use them to honour these days, so that the vendor will not be sharing in the guilt of the one who does this innovated action. And Allaah knows best.

The Fatwa of the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee was also asked a question about this holiday:

Some people celebrate the fourteenth day of February of each Christian year as the Day of Love (Valentine’s Day), where they exchange gifts of red roses and wear red clothes, and congratulate one another. Some the bakeries make sweets that are red in colour, with hearts drawn on them, and some stores have advertisements for their products that are especially for this day. What is your opinion?

The Committee replied:

It is haraam for the Muslim to help with this festival or any other haraam celebration in any way, be it food, drink, buying, selling, manufacturing, corresponding, advertising or in any other way, because all of that constitutes helping one another in sin, transgression and disobedience towards Allaah and His Messenger, and Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allaah. Verily, Allaah is Severe in punishment”*[al-Maa’idah 5:2]*

So the Muslim must adhere to the Qur’aan and Sunnah in all his affairs, especially at times of *fitan* (temptation and tribulation) and when corruption is widespread. He should be smart and be careful to avoid falling into the misguidance of those who have earned the anger of Allaah and of those who went astray, and of the evildoers who hope not for reward from Allaah and do not show any respect towards Islam. The Muslim should seek refuge with Allaah and ask for His guidance and for help to adhere steadfastly to it, because none can guide except Allaah and none can make us remain steadfast except Him. And Allaah is the Source of strength. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions, and grant them peace.

Al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah li’l-Buhooth al-‘Ilmiyah wa’l-Iftaa’

Finally, we offer our brothers the following advice:

1 – They should urge the khateebs of the mosques to tell the people and warn them. They should explain this matter to the imaam of the mosque and tell him when this day is approaching. They should give him a copy of the fatwas of the Standing Committee and of Shaykh Muhamamd ibn Saalih ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah forgive him). Every person should make the effort to contact the imaam of his mosque and tell him about this. Certainly there are imaams of mosques among the brothers so perhaps the responsibility of telling them about this will be discharged when they read this article.

2 – Every teacher should explain the reality of this holiday and warn his or her students about it. They will be answerable before Allaah tomorrow. They should explain that it is haraam by quoting the Fatwaa of the Standing Committee. All that should begin a week beforehand in order to be of any benefit.

3 – Those who go around and check on people and the headquarters of organizations should be notified of any shops which are selling gifts for this day or which put up pictures showing what the gift is or how it is wrapped.

4 – Each person should make his family members aware of this. Whoever has sisters in school or brothers should tell them and warn them about this matter, because many people are unaware of this holiday and what it means.

We ask Allaah to protect the Muslims from the harm of temptations and from the evil of their own selves and the plots of their enemies, for He is the All-hearing Who answers prayers. May Allaah send blessings upon His slave and Messenger Muhammad, and upon all his family and companions.

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